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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Housekeepers' Chat

Tuesday, August 5, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Wash Day Fads and Fancies." Program approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A. (Note this program may be too long with the recipe included)

Bulletin available: "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundry."

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We've had new neighbors for about two months -- long enough to borrow patterns and to send samples of dessert to each other's children. I won't say which way the borrowing was, in case somebody among my listeners disapproves of borrowing.

I think my neighbor, Mrs. Warren, is one of the smartest women I've seen in a long time. I mean smart in every sense -- clever, efficient, well-turned out, up-to-date in her interests. To begin with, she's "easy to look at," as Billy says. Not only in her face and her charming smile. She wears attractive and becoming house dresses as well as dress-up things. She turns off more work in a day than seems humanly possible, and yet always looks dainty and fresh and has time and energy to do pleasant things in her free hours. Quite my ideal of an efficient woman.

The other morning -- last Tuesday it was -- I was awakened a little before 6 o'clock by the sound of a nearby automobile. I looked out of the window, and there was Mrs. Warren, putting up her clothesline! She'd moved the car up the driveway where she could get it out easily. She had on a blue house dress that I borrowed the pattern for -- there, I didn't mean to let that out. All dressed and ready for work before I was out of bed!

Well, two hours later at exactly 8 o'clock, I looked across the road again. Mrs. Warren's clothesline was ornamented with the family washing, and Mrs. Warren herself, looking as fresh and cool as a wild rose, in a pink sleeveless dress and matching pink hat, was getting into her car to take the children and her husband down town. She was gone some time. The next time I saw her she was bringing in the clothes. After that she must have prepared and cleared up dinner. At a quarter to eight in the evening Mrs. Warren, in a filmy green evening dress, joined her husband in the family car.

Now perhaps some of you are thinking, "Her house can't be kept up well," but it is. It's beautifully cared for, although she does everything herself. She's simply a super-smart woman who knows how to use her time well, and turn out her necessary work in such a way that she is fresh enough in spirit when it's done to look pleasing and be a companion to her children and husband. I asked her the secret of her good management.

"For one thing," she said, "I found that Tuesday is a much better wash day than Monday. The whole week goes better. You see we take things quite easy on Sundays, and have many friends dropping in, so that I'm sure to spend more time than usual Monday just picking up the house and putting things to rights. I never seem to get quite so much help from the children Monday morning as on other days.

"I like to sort over the clothes on Monday, so I can take out fruit or coffee stains that might be set by washing, and mend any bad tears, likely to get worse from handling. Of course I use a washing machine. I wash handkerchiefs by themselves. If anybody has a cold, I boil the handkerchiefs, but usually I don't feel it's necessary to boil my clothes.

"Another reason I like to have Tuesday for washday," said Mrs. Warren, "is that it gives me time on Monday to check over my supplies, and buy such things as soap or starch if I'm running low. And I cook things ahead for most of Tuesday's meals. That makes wash day itself a lot easier. The reason I got out so early last Tuesday, and took the children to the Zoo Park, was that on Monday I had cooked double quantities of string beans and potatoes for dinner, and made a large veal loaf that could be sliced cold on Tuesday. I also made two desserts, one for Tuesday, and some cookies for the picnic lunch in the park."

Don't you agree with me that my neighbor is a pretty smart woman? I'm glad she is liberal-minded about boiling clothes. Under good conditions of washing, rinsing and drying, boiling may be omitted, except when it is desired to disinfect clothes thoroughly.

Another wash day fad I'd like to see discarded is the idea that everything should be starched. A little starch here and there may be used to restore the original finish on such things as collar and cuff sets; but excuse me from starched underwear or tablecloths! And as for starching children's clothes, it's little short of cruelty to force them to wear stiff-as-cardboard blouses, or dresses with collars that stick into them, or seams that scratch like brushes.

I hear someone saying: "Children's clothes stay clean longer, if you starch them."

Maybe so. I suspect, however, it's partly because the little dears can't move around in the lively way they usually do if their clothes are stiff and uncomfortable.

May I suggest an alternative? Choose closely woven firm wash fabrics, in smooth finishes that shed dirt, and in colors and patterns that do not look disagreeably dingy after a short wearing. Then you can omit the work of starching children's clothes.

Speaking of colors, there is another popular fallacy I'd like to dispel. That is the one about setting colors in new goods with salt or vinegar or anything else. My friend, Miss Ruth O'Brien, of the Bureau of Home Economics, told me this:

"Household methods of setting colors in wash fabrics are of no avail. If there were any good easy method of accomplishing this the manufacturers would use it. On the other hand, dyes are much better nowadays and many textiles are guaranteed fast to laundering, and fast to light. If you have any doubts about a piece of goods, take a sample home and test it under the conditions it will be exposed to. Wash it, or place it partly covered, in strong sunlight, for a few days. See for yourself whether or not the colors are fast."

One reason why women have had Monday for wash day for such a long time is because they thought they could not get their week's work done otherwise. But I believe that if Monday is devoted to putting things in good order, the rest of the week will have fewer delays and interruptions.

I asked Mrs. Warren for her recipe for Veal Loaf and the Recipe Lady tested it for me. I'm sure you will like to have it.

Eleven ingredients for Veal Loaf:

2 pounds ground raw veal	1/2 cup chopped parsley
1/2 pound, or 1 cup finely diced salt pork	1/4 cup chopped onion
1 1/2 cups milk	1 cup fine dry bread crumbs
4 tablespoons flour	2 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup chopped celery	1/8 teaspoon pepper, and
	1/8 teaspoon celery seed

Fry the salt pork until it is light brown and crisp. Remove the pieces from the pan. Make a sauce of the milk, flour, and 3 tablespoons of the pork drippings. Cook the celery, parsley, and onion for a few minutes, in the rest of the pork drippings. Add to this, the bread crumbs and seasonings. Combine all ingredients, using the hands to mix thoroughly. The mixture will have a sticky consistency. Lay a piece of parchment paper on a rack in an open roasting pan. Mold the meat loaf on the paper with the hands. Bake the loaf in a moderate oven (350° F.) for 1-1/4 hours. Do not cover the pan, and do not add water to it. Much better results are obtained by making the meat loaf in this way than by packing it into a smaller pan and baking it like a loaf of bread.

Remove the loaf from the paper and serve hot, or chill it and serve it in thin slices with parsley or watercress garnish.

Wednesday: "The School Child's Wardrobe."

